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ABSTRACT

This study explored adolescent age and gender differences in patterns of emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends. An additional purpose was to describe how familial and individual developmental characteristics influence patterns of adolescent emotional disclosure. The sample consisted of 174 junior high school students between 12 and 15 years of age. Derived from a battery of measures, data was collected on adolescent emotional self-disclosure, quality of family communication and functioning, and individual psychosocial characteristics. Results, consistent with previous research on self-disclosure, revealed that females exhibited greater emotional self-disclosures to parents and peers than did males, and that adolescent emotional self-disclosure to friends was greatest among older adolescents. In addition, while younger adolescents preferred to disclose information about their emotional state with parents, older adolescents chose to emotionally disclose to friends. Additional stepwise regression analyses revealed that emotional disclosure to parents was most strongly associated with adolescent perceptions of the openness of family communication, family cohesion, and satisfaction with family relationships. Emotional disclosure to friends was associated with adolescent self-esteem in the peer context and identity development. Results are discussed in terms of the complementary socializing processes that may operate within the contexts of family and friends. Over 50 references are cited. (RH)

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Early Adolescent Age and Gender Differences in Patterns of Emotional Self-Disclosure to Parents and Friends 1

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Abstract

This study explored adolescent age and gender differences in patterns of emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends. The sample consisted of 174 junior high school students between 12 and 15 years of age. Results revealed that females exhibited greater emotional self-disclosures to parents and peers than did males, and that adolescent emotional self-disclosure to friends was greatest among older adolescents. In addition, while younger adolescents preferred to disclose information about their emotional state with parents, older adolescents chose to emotionally disclose to friends. Additional Stepwise Regression analyses revealed that emotional disclosure to parents was most strongly associated with adolescent perceptions of the openness of family communication, family cohesion, and satisfaction with family relationships. Emotional disclosure to friends was associated with adolescent self-esteem in the peer context and identity development. The results are discussed in terms of the complementary socializing processes that may operate within the contexts of family and friends.

Early Adolescent Age and Gender Differences in Patterns of Emotional Self-Disclosure to Parents and Friends

Adolescence has long been recognized as a period in the life-span where there is considerable emotional upheaval (A. Freud, 1968). Many contemporary researchers have argued that these affective disruptions are beneficial to the adolescent's psychosocial growth and development when they occur in moderation (Grotevant & Cooper, 1983, 1986; Holmbeck & Hill, 1988; Papini, Sebby, & Clark, 1988; Steinberg, 1987, 1988). One way in which adolescents can cope with these emotions is to discuss them with the important elements of their social support networks; parents and friends. The purpose of this study is to a) identify age and gender differences in adolescent emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends, and b) to describe how familial and individual developmental characteristics influence patterns of adolescent emotional disclosure.

The classic definition of self-disclosure as "the act of making yourself manifest, showing yourself so that others can perceive you" (p. 19, Jourard, 1971) has been extensively refined to incorporate elements of intentionality, social-relational context, and overt verbal utterances (Allen, 1974; Chelune, 1979; Cozby, 1973). Self-disclosure can now be defined as an intentional and voluntary verbal utterance that conveys personal information to another within a specific social context. Emotional self-disclosure can be defined as any intentional and voluntary verbal utterance which conveys information about the

emotional state of the individual to parents and friends.

The study of emotional self-disclosure during early adolescence is important for a variety of reasons (Archer, 1987). First, the emotional state of an individual is not directly observable, but is presumed to have a significant impact upon behavior during adolescence. Second, the depth and breadth of the biopsychosocial changes that typically occur during this phase of development are likely to have a detrimental impact upon early adolescent mental and emotional well-being (Petersen, 1987; Petersen & Spiga, 1982). Previous research indicates that moderate amounts of self-disclosure are associated with individual mental health (Carpenter, 1987; Stiles, 1987). Thus, overall well-being may be enhanced when the adolescent's emotional states are discussed with parents and friends.

Changes in adolescent emotional states are usually attributed to a variety of biopsychosocial antecedents. For example, Grotevant and Cooper (1983, 1986) have conceptualized adolescent separation-individuation as a dialectical process involving both separateness and connectedness. Their observations of family interaction patterns during adolescence revealed that adolescent psychosocial development was facilitated when the adolescent was able to openly express differences in personal perspective in a supportive family context. The adolescent's willingness to discuss their emotional state with parents may likewise be related to perceptions of the emotional cohesiveness of the family as well as the quality of existing

communication patterns with parents.

Snoek and Rothblum (1979) found that adolescents who perceive their parents as being warm and nurturant engage in significantly more self-disclosure about a variety of topics. Adolescents from the most affectionate families were found to disclose more not only with their parents, but with peers as well. These findings provide evidence that self-disclosure is shaped in the family and generalized to other interpersonal relationships. Thus, emotional self-disclosure during early adolescence may be influenced by the affective and communicative quality of the family context.

A variety of other authors have investigated which parent is the preferred target for self-disclosure by adolescents (Rivenbark, 1971; Wiebe & Williams, 1972; Yang & Hwang, 1980). The results of these studies suggest that the mother is usually the preferred target for adolescent self-disclosures. However, some researchers have found age and gender differences in this mother preference pattern. Wiebe and Williams report that whereas males disclose equally to mothers and fathers, females disclose significantly more to mothers than fathers. Thus, the self-disclosure pattern of adolescents to parents appears to be influenced by individual (ex. gender) as well as familial (ex. warmth) qualities.

Another antecedent of emotional self-disclosure that may assume greater importance during the early adolescent years is pubertal maturation. There is little doubt that the physical

changes of early adolescence require some adjustments by the family and friendship contexts in which adolescent development is embedded (Hill & Holmbeck, 1987). Some researchers have reported a relationship between adolescent pubertal growth and the affective quality of family relationships (Hill, Holmbeck, Marlow, Green, & Lynch, 1985a, 1985b; Papini, Datan, & McCluskey-Fawcett, 1988; Papini & Sebby, 1987, 1988; Steinberg, in press, 1988). In general, these studies have yielded systematic differences in family affect as the adolescent approaches the apex of the pubertal growth spurt. Specifically, the relationships of apex pubertal families are characterized by increased conflict and assertiveness and decreased supportiveness relative to families with prepubertal and postpubertal adolescents.

Steinberg (in press, 1988) has cast this pattern of findings in the form of an emotional distancing hypothesis: familial adaptation to adolescent pubertal development results in increased emotional distance between the parent and adolescent. If, in fact, the relationship between parents and early adolescents are characterized by greater emotional distance, then adolescent emotional disclosure to parents should decline among adolescents experiencing rapid physical change (the greatest variability in pubertal development is observed in the 13-14 year-old age range, Tanner, 1972). Thus, these findings provide some basis for the expectation that patterns of emotional self-disclosure will differ across the early adolescent age range.

If adolescents do not discuss their emotional feelings with parents, who do they discuss them with? One possible answer to this question is suggested by the separation-individuation model of adolescence (Blos, 1979). During the separation-individuation process the adolescent emotionally separates or distances (Steinberg, 1988) the self from the family of origin, and establishes a new sense of self through interaction with peers. The peer group may gradually assume an important role in the socialization process as adolescents form same- and opposite-sex friendships. This is not to say that the family context is unimportant to the socialization of adolescents, but that the peer and family context may complement the development of adaptive patterns of emotional self-disclosure.

The child's adaptation to the many developmental changes of early adolescence may be facilitated by greater communication with friends as well as parents about their emotions. Indeed, a variety of researchers have reported that adolescents disclose more to peers than to parents (Jourard, 1971; Komarovsky, 1974; Rivenbark, 1971). Again, this does not imply that parental influence is replaced by peer influence. Research investigating the influence of parents and peers on adolescent problem behaviors reveals that both parents and peers contribute to adolescent alcohol use (Biddle, Bank, & Marlin 1980), cigarette smoking (Chassin, Presson, Sherman, Montello, & McGrew, 1986), and sexual values (Fisher, 1987). In general, these studies reveal that peer influence is greatest during middle adolescence

(Berndt, 1979; Fisher, 1986). Thus, the socialization processes of early adolescence may be characterized by a change from a strong parental focus towards complementary contributions from parents and friends.

Research on self-disclosure indicates that female adolescents engage in more self-revelation to friends than male adolescents (Hill & Stull, 1987; Norrell, 1984). Disclosure to friends has also been found to increase with age. However, boys have been found to exhibit an inverted U-Shaped function for self-disclosure across the high school years while girls exhibit no such fluctuation. In addition to age and gender differences, Sparks (1976) has described a positive relationship between adolescent self-esteem and self-disclosure. Adolescents who have positive evaluations of the self are more likely to share personal information with others. Unfortunately, relatively little is known about the adolescent's communication with parents and friends about their emotions. The literature does provide some support for the notion that familial (i.e. cohesion) and individual (i.e. age, gender, self-esteem) developmental characteristics may be associated with patterns of emotional self-disclosure to both parents and friends during adolescence.

Based on the existing literature, several expectations regarding the findings of this study can be advanced. First, adolescent gender and age differences were expected. Previous research on self-disclosure reveals a marked tendency for females to be more self-revealing than males, and for younger adolescents

to engage in more disclosure than older adolescents (e.g. Rivenbark, 1971). Second, it was anticipated that adolescents would exhibit different patterns of emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends with age, such that the youngest adolescents would disclose more to their parents and older adolescents would disclose more to their friends. This expectation is supported by a modest literature which suggests that early adolescents disclose more to parents, but that middle adolescents are more peer-oriented.

Third, patterns of emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends were expected to be related in specific ways to measures of family functioning and individual development. Positive affect and open communication styles within the family were anticipated to predict emotional self-disclosure to parents. The individual's sense of self-esteem and identity development were also expected to be positively related to emotional self-disclosure with both parents and friends. Adolescents with a well developed sense of self, and those with a positive evaluation of the self, were expected to engage in more emotional self-disclosure with parents and friends.

Method

Subjects. Participants for this study were students enrolled in a public junior high school. The original population consisted of 300 students in grades 7 through 9. A total of 202 students completed and returned the materials. Unfortunately, the information provided by 28 students was dropped from the

study because they either did not complete all of the questionnaires, or their responses on the questionnaires were not plausible. The 174 students comprising the final sample represents a 50% participation rate. The distribution of subjects across age and gender is depicted in Table 1. The

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number of adolescents in each of the age groups is similar to the proportion of these ages in the junior high population. However, females exhibited a greater willingness to participate in this study than males.

An assessment of the family background for participants in this study revealed that the average age for the mother and father was 37 and 39 respectively. The parents also tended to be well educated, with adolescents reporting that both mothers and fathers had at least some college. The vast majority of participants came from two-parent families (73%) in which the mother was employed outside of the home (82%). In addition, most of the students were laterborns with an average of two siblings.

Procedure. All of the subjects received packets of questionnaires to be filled out at home and returned to their social studies teacher. The packets contained a battery of measures selected to assess emotional self-disclosure and adolescent perceptions about a variety of familial and individual characteristics. Each of these measures is defined in greater

detail below.

Measures. Assessment of the relationship between adolescent emotional self-disclosure and family and individual developmental characteristics is most efficiently accomplished within a multivariate framework. Data was collected from three domains of adolescent behavior: emotional self-disclosure, quality of family communication and functioning, and individual psychosocial characteristics.

1. Emotional Self-Disclosure. The Emotional Self-Disclosure Scale (ESDS; Snell, Miller, & Belk, 1988) is a 40 item measure designed to assess the adolescent's communication with others about a variety of emotional topics and concerns. The emotional topics and concerns presented in the ESDS include depression, happiness, jealousy, anxiety, anger, calmness, apathy, and fear. Adolescents were instructed to report the frequency of communications about their emotions with their mother, father, best male friend, and best female friend. Their responses were based on a 5-point Likert scale with the following anchors: 1 = have never discussed this topic, and 5 = have often discussed this topic.

Emotional self-disclosure scores to parents and friends were obtained by summing all responses to mother-father and best male-female friend targets. Emotional disclosure to parents and friends ranged in value from 80-400, with high scores reflecting greater emotional disclosure. The test-retest reliability of the ESDS is high (.73), and Cronbach's alpha coefficient reveals

strong internal consistency (.88).

2. Quality of Family Communication and Functioning. The quality of family communication and functioning was accomplished through the use of several measures.

A. Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale III - The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale III (FACES; Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985) provides for an assessment of the adolescent's perception of the family's flexibility in dealing with change (adaptability) and the quality of emotional bonding existing between family members (cohesion). The FACES consists of 20 items employing a 5-point Likert format, with low scores reflecting low adaptability and cohesion. The FACES has sound psychometric properties, with high test-retest reliability on both scales (Adaptability = .80; Cohesion = .83), and adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha Adaptability = .62; Cohesion = .77). In addition, the two scales are orthogonal (r = .03) to one another.

B. Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale - The Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (PAC; Barnes & Olson, 1982) provide an assessment of the quality of various features of parent-adolescent communication. This instrument yields two subscale scores. The Openness of Parent-Adolescent Communication subscale assesses the quality of information exchange between adolescents and their parents. The Problems in Parent-Adolescent Communication subscale identifies barriers to parent-adolescent communication. Each of these subscales consists of 20 items

employing a 5-point Likert response format. High scores reflect greater openness or problems in parent-adolescent communication. The subscales of the PAC possesses high reliability (Cronbach's Alpha Openness = .87, Problems = .78) and construct validity.

C. Interactive Behavior Questionnaire - The Interactive Behavior Questionnaire (IBQ; Prinz, Foster, Kent, & OLeary, 1979) assesses adolescent satisfaction with the parent's behavior, and the adolescent's satisfaction with the affective quality of their dyadic relationship with their mother and father. This measure has been demonstrated to possess high reliability and behavioral validity. High scores on the IBQ reflect greater dissatisfaction with parental behavior or with the affective quality of the parent-adolescent relationship.

3. Psychosocial Characteristics. Adolescent psychosocial maturity was assessed with two instruments.

A. Hare Self-Esteem Scale - The Hare Self-Esteem Scale (HSES; Shoemaker, 1980) provides a measure of self-concept that is specific to the contexts (peers, home, and school) in which adolescent development is embedded. The HSES consists of 30 items with a 4-point Likert scale response format such that high scores reflect high self-esteem. The test-retest reliability of each of the subscales and the total score is high, ranging from .56 to .74. The convergent validity of the HSES was established by demonstrating significant correlations with other established measures. The factorial validity of the HSES was established by generating independent factor structures relating to each of the

three contexts.

B. Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status - The Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (OM-EIS; Grotevant & Adams, 1984) yields information about the quality of the adolescent's identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion. The OM-EIS consists of 64 items employing a 6-point Likert scale format so that high scores reflect high identity status characteristics. Split-half and test-retest reliability was high for all of the identity statuses, and the OM-EIS was found to possess factorial and convergent/discriminant validity.

Collectively, the battery of measures employed in this study permitted a more thorough description of the relationship between an adolescent's family and individual developmental characteristics and emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends.

Results

The results of this investigation are presented in two sections. The first section describes age and gender differences in adolescent emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends. These differences were identified through the use of a 2 (gender) X 4 (adolescent age) regression based analyses of variance in order to control for the unequal cell samples. Tukey's test for unequal groups was employed as a follow-up for age effects and significant interactions. The second section provides data to explain variations in patterns of adolescent emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends. Separate Stepwise Regression

analyses were conducted on emotional disclosure to parents and friends using familial and individual characteristics as predictors.

Emotional Self-Disclosure to Parents and Friends

As anticipated, there was a significant difference in female and male adolescent emotional self-disclosures to parents (F (1, 166) = 6.43, $p<.01$). The means and standard deviations presented in Table 2 reveal that females disclosed more to parents than did

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Insert Table 2 about here.

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male adolescents. The age of the adolescent was not related to emotional disclosure to parents (F (3, 166) = .89, ns). The age X gender interaction was also not significantly related to the adolescent's emotional disclosure to parents (F (3, 166) = 1.74, ns). Thus, adolescent daughters appear to discuss more of their feelings with parents than do sons.

Differences in the adolescent's emotional disclosure to friends were found for both age (F (3, 166) = 2.71, $p<.05$) and gender (F (1, 166) = 6.98, $p<.01$). The means and standard deviations reveal that females disclose more of their emotional feelings to friends than do males. In addition, the post-hoc comparison of age differences revealed a positively accelerating linear trend by age such that 15 year-olds disclosed significantly more to friends than did 12 year-olds. However, the age X gender interaction was not significantly related to the

adolescent's emotional self disclosure to friends (F (3, 166) = 2.12, ns). Thus, emotional self-disclosure to friends was associated with adolescent age and gender.

One question which has not yet been addressed is concerned with whether or not there are age and gender differences in emotional self-disclosure to parents versus friends during the adolescent years. In order to empirically assess this question, a difference score was generated by subtracting each individual's total disclosures to friends from their total disclosures to parents. The resulting measure was positive if disclosures to parents was greater than disclosures to friends, and negative if disclosure to friends was greater than disclosures to parents. The results of the analysis of variance revealed a significant age effect (F (3, 166) = 3.29, $p<.05$). The means and standard deviations presented in Table 2 indicate that emotional disclosure becomes directed more towards friends than parents as the adolescent gets older. Specifically, the 12 year-olds were more likely to disclose to parents, while the 15 year-olds were more likely to disclose to friends.

Having described adolescent emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends, the questions that now emerge concern how to explain variations in adolescent patterns of disclosure. What are the familial and individual developmental characteristics that are associated with emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends?

Familial and Individual Developmental Antecedents

In order to address the above question, separate Stepwise Regression analyses were conducted on emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends with measures of family functioning and indivdual characteristics serving as predictors. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 3. With few exceptions,

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Insert Table 3 about here.

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the obtained pattern of findings predict adolescent emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends in the anticipated directions.

Emotional self-disclosure to parents was significantly associated with the communicative and affective quality of family functioning and with adolescent psychosocial competence (R-Square = .23, F (3, 170) = 21.07, $p<.0001$). An examination of Table 3 indicates that adolescent emotional disclosure to parents was highest when (a) the adolescent perceived open communication with parents, (b) the adolescent perceived the family context as cohesive, and (c) the adolescent was satisfied with the affective quality of their relationship with both the mother and father. Thus, adolescent perceptions of the quality of communication and functioning in the family context was familial associated with emotional self-disclosure to parents. Emotional disclosure to parents was not associated with individual developmental characteristics.

Emotional self-disclosure to friends was significantly associated with adolescent psychosocial characteristics (R-Square = .08, F (2, 171) = 5.33, $p<.05$) but not with the communicative and affective quality of the family context. An examination of Table 3 reveals that adolescent emotional self-disclosure to friends was highest when (a) the adolescent reports experiencing a state of identity diffusion (neither crisis nor committment), and (b) the adolescent positively evaluates the self in the context of the peer group. Thus, adolescent emotional self-disclosure to friends was largely associated with individual developmental characteristics rather than features of family functioning.

Discussion

The pattern of adolescent age and gender differences in emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends described in the findings are consistent with previous research on self-disclosure. The finding that females disclose significantly more of their emotions to parents and friends than do males corresponds with findings from social psychology (Balswick & Peek, 1971; Sattel, 1976; Sommers, 1984; Spence, Deaux, & Helmreich, 1984). These authors contend that the emotional inexpressiveness of males is rooted in the different socialization experiences of males and females in the larger culture. To express emotional concerns and feelings to parents and friends is simply not consistent with traditional masculine sex-roles (Lombardo & Berzonsky, 1980). In contrast, females may

be socialized to disclose their emotions in order to enhance the social responsiveness of others (Berg, 1987) and to facilitate the development of social relationships (Baxter, 1987).

Age differences in adolescent emotional self-disclosure to friends, but not parents, are also consistent with the findings reported in the social psychological and developmental literatures. As adolescents experience the biopsychosocial changes associated with the transition from childhood to adolescence they appear to disclose more about their emotional states to their friends. Specifically, adolescent emotional self-disclosure to friends increased from 12 to 15 years of age. In addition, 12 year-old adolescents prefer to emotionally disclose to parents whereas 15 year-old adolescents prefer to disclose their emotions to friends.

These findings provide indirect support for the emotional distancing hypothesis (Steinberg, in press). Adolescent emotional self-disclosure to parents becomes less pronounced as the adolescents experienced the ages at which the physical changes associated with the onset of puberty are most pronounced. Perhaps adolescents adapt to these age-related changes by increasingly communicating their emotional concerns with those who are experiencing similar developments; their friends. Thus, while the early adolescent years appear to be characterized by a preference to deal with emotions in the family context, the middle adolescent years are characterized by the emergence of the peer group as a socializing context in which adolescents learn to

deal with their emotions. This is not to suggest that the family becomes less important as adolescents get older, but that there is a need to recognize and investigate more fully the complementary contributions that the contexts provided by the family and friends may have for the adolescent's ability to appropriately cope with their emotional concerns and states.

The relationship of familial and individual developmental characteristics with adolescent emotional disclosure to parents and friends is also consistent with previous research. In general, the findings indicate that emotional disclosure to parents is associated with adolescent perceptions of the quality of family communication and functioning, while emotional disclosure to friends is more strongly related to individual developmental characteristics. A similar relationship has recently been reported in a study of sexual self-disclosure among high school students (Papini, Clark, & Snell, 1988). These authors found that adolescent perceptions about the affective quality of the family context predicted sexual self-disclosure to parents, while adolescent perceptions about the extent to which they had established emotionally interdependent relations with friends predicted sexual self-disclosure to friends. Thus, these findings appear to be fairly consistent even though a different battery of measures and a different sample was employed in the present study.

The specific findings from the stepwise regression analyses provide additional clarification of how individual qualities and

features of the family context may shape patterns of adolescent emotional self-disclosure. Adolescent's disclose more about their emotional states to parents when they perceive the parents as being open to discussion, warm and caring, and when they feel they have good relationships with parents. Unfortunately, the present data do not permit an assessment of the reciprocal effects of emotional disclosure on perceptions of the affective quality of family relations and communication patterns. There is a distinct possibility that self-disclosure is an antecedent, as well as a product, of the affective quality of the family context. Longitudinal data are needed to more adequately address these complex relationships.

Interestingly, emotional self-disclosure among family members may be lowest when families are perceived as being closed to communication, emotionally detached, and when there is dissatisfaction with the affective quality of family relationships. Such families may be at high-risk for subsequent dysfunction given the relationship between self-disclosure and mental health. One suitable strategy for helping families adapt to the normal changes brought about by the child's transition into adolescence may be to focus on patterns of self-disclosure in the counseling (Hendrick, 1987) setting.

Adolescent emotional self-disclosure to friends was most strongly associated with self-esteem in the peer group and sense of identity diffusion. When adolescent's have a positive evaluation of the self in the context of peers they tend to

disclose concerns about their emotional states to friends. The absence of a sense of identity diffusion (neither crisis nor committment) was related to greater disclosure to friends. Evidently, adolescents who feel psychosocially adrift do not communicate their emotions to friends. Thus, adolescent emotional disclosure may play a role in the formulation of esteem enhancing friendships which may facilitate psychosocial competencies.

The discrepancy in the amount of variance accounted for in the two regression models (R-Squares = .23 and .08 for disclosure to parents and friends respectively) is probably a result of inadequately assessing adolescent emotional separation from the family of origin and individuation in friendships. Previous research (ex. Fischer, 1986, 1987; Papini, Clark, & Snell, 1988) has revealed that the strongest predictor of adolescent sexual disclosure to friends was the extent to which adolescents had been able to achieve emotionally interdependent relations with friends. Although speculative, had such a measure been employed in the present study it is plausible that the variance accounted for would have been considerably higher for the emotional disclosure to friends model.

Collectively, these results provide additional insight into the origins of adolescent emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends. The social contexts provided by family and friends may provide complementary contributions to the socialization of adolescent expressions of emotional states and concerns. Among

early adolescents, the family appears to be the preferred forum in which to express these emotions. Among middle adolescents, the peer group appears to be the preferred context in which to discuss emotions. As adolescents begin to emotionally separate from the family of origin they may turn towards peers for emotional support. Thus, the emotional distancing hypothesis may be incomplete. Familial adaptation to adolescent pubertal development may result in increased emotional distance between the parent and adolescent, which is compensated for by increased emotional disclosure to friends. However, given the findings that the emotional self-disclosure of males to parents and friends is less than that of females, males may not be as adaptively socialized as females to make full use of the emotional support which friends can provide.

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Table 1

Number of adolescents by gender and age with totals in parentheses.

	Adolescent Age				
Gender	12	13	14	15	
Females	15	36	35	21	(107)
Males	11	21	23	12	(67)
	(26)	(57)	(58)	(33)	(174)

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Significant Age and Gender Differences in Adolescent Emotional Self-disclosure to Parents, Friends, and Parents vs. Friends.

Target	Mean	Standard Deviation
Emotional Self-Disclosure to Parents		
Females	269.32	69.90
Males	245.57	73.68
Emotional Self-Disclosure to Friends		
Females	276.69	56.32
Males	255.00	66.21
12 year-olds	241.42	47.79a
13 year-olds	263.17	58.64
14 year-olds	276.50	63.34
15 year-olds	284.12	64.78a
Emotional Self-Disclosure to Parents vs. Friends		
12 year-olds	24.04	69.05b
13 year-olds	-13.75	65.27
14 year-olds	-6.14	73.20
15 year-olds	-27.45	73.73b

Means with the same letter next to them are significantly different from each other using Tukey for unequal cell sizes.

Table 3

Separate Stepwise Regression Analyses for Adolescent Emotional Self-Disclosure to Parents and Friends.

Target	Beta	R-Square	F	P>F
Emotional Self-Disclosure to Parents		.23	21.07	.0001
Openess of P-A Communication	1.74	.17	37.01	.0001
Family Cohesion	1.82	.03	4.28	.05
Affective Quality of the P-A Relationship	-2.02	.03	4.11	.05
Emotional Self-Disclosure to Friends		.08	5.33	.05
Peer Self-Esteem	3.03	.05	4.69	.05
Identity Diffusion	-1.11	.03	4.21	.05